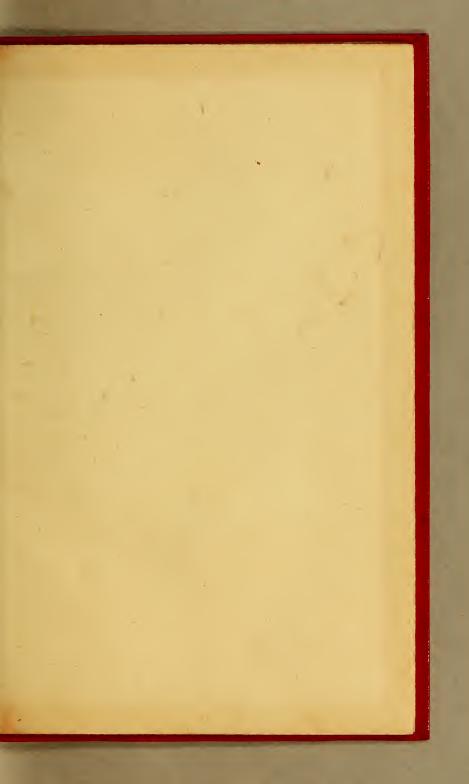
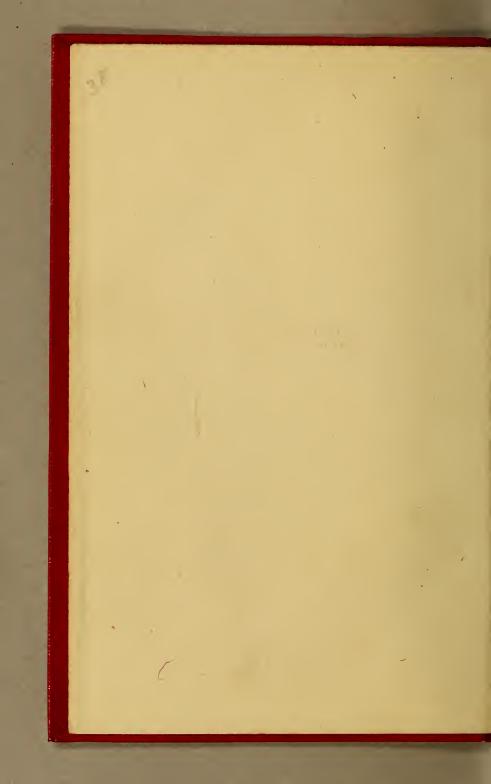




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State of the Trade

Carried on with the

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FRENCH

On the Island of HISPANIOLA,

By the Merchants in North-America,

Under Colour of FLAGS of TRUCE.

Occasioned by some Captures of the said Flags, lately made by his Majesty's Ships under the Command of Admiral COTES.

By a MERCHANT of LONDON.

Queis paria esse fere placuit peccata, laborant Quum ventum ad verum est.

HOR.



LONDON: Printed,

And, New-York, Re-printed, and Sold by H. GAINE, Bookfeller and Stationer, at his Printing-Office, at the Bible and Crown, in Hanover-Square, 1760. 10 1

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State of the Trade

Carried on with the

FRENCH

On the Island of HISPANIOLA.

N a nation like this, whose wealth, splendor and power, intirely depend on its commerce being properly supported and encouraged, no attempt ought to be made, to put a ftop to it, unless on the most mature consideration, and the most exact scrutiny, it should appear to be manifestly injurious to the publick. And altho' fuch a disquisition is often attended with great difficulties (as in the case of the East India company's trade, where, in order to form a proper judgment of its utility or inconvenience, you must not only have an eye to the money and other commodities that are primarily exported from hence, and to the returns made for the same immediately from the Indies; but also consider to what places the goods so imported are again fent, and what returns are made for them; and fo on almost ad infinitum) yet that is not the case in any commerce, where the adventure is finally concluded in the course of a few months, and a ballance struck, by which it may be easily seen what quantity of cash is brought into the Kingdom, more than is exported; that being the fure criterion, by which we may judge with truth and precision of the advantage, or difadvantage, of any particular branch. But it is so common for people to judge by appearances only, without having the means of information in their power, or leifure or attention fufficient to enable them to gain a competent knowledge of the circumstances which are necessary to be known, in order to form a just opinion of the facts they either censure or applaud; and self-interest, and popular prejudices are so apt to biass and mislead the greater part of mankind, that I am not surprized at hearing

hearing many express their wishes, "that the flags of truce, which have lately been taken in the West Indies, by some of his majesty's ships, under the command of admiral Cotes, returning from Hispanisla to North-America, laden with sugars 66 and other valuable commodities, purchased of the French, " may be condemned as prizes to the captors;" "to prevent," " fay they, for the future, the iniquitous trade carried on by 66 our colonists, to the prejudice of their mother-country." If that affertion be true, if the trade thus carried on by the merchants in North-America be found prejudicial and injurious to the nation, may their wishes be gratified: But if, on the contrary, it shall appear to be of the greatest benefit to the kingdom, and the mein fourfe from whence we have been enabled to support the extraordinary demands for cash, that have been made upon us in order to enable his majesty to carry on the present just and necessary, but most expensive war, how much does it deserve encouragement? and how much is the public injured by the commanders of fuch of his majesty's ships of war, as are employed in taking flags of truce, and enriching themselves at the expence of their fellow citizens, and the commonweal? instead of using the power they are intrusted with, for the protection of the trade and commerce of his majesty's subjects against the enemy, whose privateers are little worth looking after, when their value is compared with that of a cargo of lugar and indico. In order that the public may judge whether the commerce abovementioned be pernicious or beneficial, I shall, with the utmost impartiality, and the strictest regard to truth, give an account of the method in which it has been carried on; and after shewing, as briefly as possible, some of the benefits the nation has reaped by it, endeavour to obviate the only objections I have ever heard made thereto.

During the present war, many English ships have been made prize of by the enemy in the West-Indies, and many of the enemy's ships have been taken by the privateers of New-York, Philadelphia, Boston, and other our colonies in North-America, and the crews imprisoned; but as they were so dispersed over the whole continent, that a considerable number could not easily be collected together at any one place, so they must have languished in prison in North-America, while the crews of our vessels, which were taken by the enemy, were dying in the goals of the French islands; where, from the excessive heat of the climate, close consinement is more insupportable than

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than ellewhere; or the government must have been put to a very considerable expence, in having them exchanged. But private merchants were informed, that if they could obtain flags of truce from time to time, to carry the French prisoners to the island of Hispaniola, they should not only have an equal number in exchange, but moreover should be allowed a liberty of trading for the commodities of the country; which, as the French could not fend to France themselves, on account of the prodigious insurance they are obliged to pay on their veffels bound to Europe, were of little or no value to them, and might be purchased at a most reasonable rate. Upon this consideration, a number of gentlemen engaged to carry fuch prisoners to the ports of Leoganne, Cape Francois, Port au Prince, and other French ports in Hispaniola, and bring back an equal number in return, without any expence to the government. Accordingly flags of truce have been granted by the governors of the several provinces in North-America to a great number of vessels, which have proceeded on their respective voyages, loaded with fuch goods as they thought most proper to purchase their cargoes of sugar and indico at their ports of destination in the abovementioned island of Hispaniola. The commodities carried from the continent for the above purpose, chiefly confifted of printed linnens and cottons of English manufacture, Irish linnens, woollen cloths, printed callicoes, shoes, stocks ings, spices, French prize wines, and Spanish pistoles, reduced to the weight of 3 dwts. 12 gra. which pass in Hispaniola for 30 livres. These commodities yield from 50 to 100 per cent. profit; and with the Produce thereof have those vessels procured their cargoes of fugars, which have been purchased from 5 to 10 livres per hundred weight; fo that, supposing a cargo, with which one of these vessels was loaded at Philadelphia, New-York, or elsewhere in North-America, to be worth 1000% sterling, and to sell at 50 per cent. profit, it is worth at Port au Prince, or any other French port in Hispaniola, more than 60,000 livres. This fum, at 10 livres per cent. for Muscovado fugar, will purchase 600 hogsheads of that commodity of one thousand weight each, which are sent to Holland, and fold at the rate of, from 40s. to 50s. fterl. per hundred weight; or one hogshead with another for about 251, and the produce remitted to England, and there laid out in English goods, to be exported for North-America; so that for about 31. 5s. sterl. the nation receives the fum of 251. sterl. or near 800 per cent. besides the advantage the nation receives, by employing so many

7 6 7 many thips and mariners unmolested by the enemy. It is faid, that on a moderate computation, not fo little as 400,000 l. sterling's worth of commodities of British manufacture, or the produce of our colonies, have, during this war, been thus fent to the French islands from North-America; which must bring back into this kingdom, the enormous profit of 3,200,0001. That the fact here represented is true, any gentleman may fatisfy himself, by enquiry of the merchants, who trade to New-York, or Philadelphia, who can neither be ignorant of the channel, thro' which their remittances come, nor of the extraordinary call that hath been made for goods of English manufacture, for those markets; insomuch, that all the manufacturers find it out of their power to supply the demand; from which it is extremely evident, what prodigious advantage results to this kingdom from this commerce. In short, we may with truth affirm, that Hispanicla, thus circumffanced, is equally valuable to the British nation, in the hands of the French, with any of our own islands, and much more fo than Guadaloupe; the conquest of which (tho' glorious) cost no small quantity both of blood and treasure. These advantages must necessarily be lost, if the vessels abovementioned, which now are, or hereafter shall be taken, be condemned;

and the trade will be intirely put a stop to.

Zeal, not according to knowledge, in some, and self-interest in others, have been the occasion that this trade hath been deemed pernicious and prejudicial. But let us examine their objections with impartiality and candor, and give them no more than their due weight; and it will be clearly seen which scale will preponderate. The objections I have heard are these, viz. That under pretence of carrying other goods, the slags carry provisions and warlike stores to the enemy—That by bringing such quantities of French sugar into Europe, from the French islands, we injure our own—And lassly, that unless the French were supplied by us, they could not carry on their sugar-works, but must entirely abandon them, or perhaps would surrender themselves up, and seek protection from this nation.

In answer to the first objection, nothing more need be said, than to deny the fact; which, I believe, might with justice be done; as few, if any vessels, carry provisions; and none, that I ever heard of, have carried warlike stores. That the French in Hispanicla have been supplied with some provisions from the most northern of the American colonies, and the island

island of Jamaica t, but not by the slags of truce, is true; for if I am rightly informed, the French do not infift on a veffel's having a flag that brings hem provisions, but they are protected and countenanced without. Severe laws have been made to prevent the colonies from carrying provisions to the French, or even to neutral powers, as it hath been deemed by the legiflature a pernicious trade; and by those laws, persons carrying it on are liable to punishment. But whether it might not be more politic, to permit the French and neutral islands to be supplied with provisions from North-America, rather than prohibit it, may be worth the confideration of the legislature, from this observation, viz. that from the island of Hispaniola, where they have of late been by some means or another supplied with provisions, few or no privateers have been fitted out, to annoy or distress our commerce; whereas, from the island of Martinico, where they are not supplied by the same means, they have equipped fo many privateers, as to injure our trade to the Leeward Islands in the most essential manner; and have taken so many vessels laden with bread and flour from North-America to our West India islands, the only places they have the liberty of shipping to, that those commodities, during the course of the war, have been cheaper in Martinico than at the places of their growth. Add to this, that Monto Christi, a Spanish port, from whence the French part of the island of Hispaniola may be easily supplied with all kind of provisions and necessaries, is open both to Spanish and other European vessels, who may always supply the French by that channel with whatever is necessary for them, without a posfibility of our preventing it any other way, than by coming to a rupture with Spain (the propriety of which measure is what I am not a judge of) and I believe it is from thence that the French have been supplied this war. But not to insist on this atall, if any flags are taken with provisions, the captain and freighters will doubtless incur the penalty of the late act of parliament; the severity of which will surely prevent such a trade, if it is put in force. But ought that to be a reason for condemning those who do not carry or fuch a trade?

A trade with Hispaniola, hath been constantly carried on this war by stags of truce from Jamaica, but the returns have been influence enough with the commanders of his majesty's ships to ause them to wink at it; or whether a more interesting motive hath been the reason those ships have not shared the same sate with hose of North-America, I am not able to determine; but sew, if my, have been taken.

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The next-objection is, that the bringing fo much sugar from

the French islands hurts our own.

The annual importation of fugar from all our islands, on an average, amounts to no more than 64344 hogsheads; and the annual consumption in Great Britain only, to 58773 hogsheads, calculating each hogshead to weigh 14 hundred weight. Ireland consumes 15000 hogsheads at least; and North-America as much; so that we consume ourselves annually upwards of 24000 hogsheads more than our own islands will supply.

An account of the quantity of raw fugar imported from Christmas 1745 to Christmas 1755, distinguishing each year.

143.	Cwt.	gr.	1b.
To Christmas 1746	753,449		17
1747		2	14
1748	981,449	1	6
1749	. 933;296	2 5	5
1750 TT	914,044	2 .	3
July 3 0 - 1751	825,947	E	27
1752		0	5
1753		3-	T.
1754		2	12
1755		(O)	25
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An Account of the quantity of raw sugar exported from Christma.

1745 to Christmas 1755, distinguishing each year.

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To Christmas	1746	93,244	0.	22
- 111 W 1 1 0	1747-	- 51,885	. I.	T
	1748-	115,727	1-1	II
2	1749-	128,107	720	6
5 to 1 60 00 18	1750	107,904	Q.,	22
3 40	1751-	43,709	3.	6.
	1752-	34,712	4	16
	1753-	55,687	2	1 0
100 1000	1754	42,818	2	17
An any good how	¥755-	105.030	0	24
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frince of the	310 6	779,947	/ X	19

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The acquisition of Guadaloupe, and the quantity of French prize fogars fradulently imported as of the growth of that island, or repacked and imported as the produce of our own islands, rendered it absolutely impossible to know with any degree of certainty the quantity imported of the growth of our own islands since the

Th order to make good which deficiency, recourse must be had to foreign markets; and in fact, Ireland is supplied with Brazil fugars from Lifton, and North-America from the French islands, even in time of peace §: 2 So that we are in reality no otherwife benefited by the exports from our fugar colonies, than as they keep the cash among outselves, which must otherwise befent abroad for the purchase of foreign sugars, but do not add a penny more to the common flock. 'Tis true, indeed, the gentlemen who have large effates in our West India islands, may fay, we should get a great deal more money for our fugars, provided no French fugars were to come into Europe, which is undoubtedly true; but from whom would they receive this additional profit? would it not be from the subjects of Great Britain, who, as is before observed, use more than all our islands can produce? and supposing the English did not bring the French sugars into Europe, would it from thence sollow, that the French sugars would not come to market at all? Would not the Spaniards, the Danes, the Dutch, and other nations, who now only fhare with us in this branch, have it all to themselves; and as effectually keep the price down in foreign markets, as at present? so that Great Britain alone would pay advanced prices on fugars, to the benefit of the planters and gentlemen who have estates in our islands; the profits of which, at the prefent prices their produce fells for, are vaftly large, compared to those of any landed estates in Great-Britain. If the fact is as above represented, furely the private emolument of a few particular gentlemen in our West India islands, will not be a sufficient reason for putting a stop to a branch of com-

war; which are the reasons why the above account is not conti-

merce, by which the nation is to confiderably benefited. Indeed, if the produce of our islands, or if the fugars made in our islands were to reduced in price, by the quantity of French fugars brought to market in Europe, that the islanders could not receive a profit sufficient to enable them to carry on their works, they would have reason to complain, and their objection would have great weight. But is either of these the case?

nued to this present time.

[§] I would not be understood to mean, that neither Ireland nor North-America are supplied with any from North-America; but I believe, if we allow that the half of their consumption is supplied from our islands, it is more than we ought to do, especially, if we consider, that of the trilling quantity exported from hence, much the greatest part is sent to Ireland:

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will any one be hardy enough to affertit? It is well known, that in the first instance they do not in all the islands produce sufficient for our own consumption; and let the opulence, riches, and I had almost said, undue instuence of the West-In-

dians, answer the other.

But, say the gentlemen who are very sanguine in their endeavours to put a stop to the North-Americans trading with the Enemy, "If we were to prevent the French in Hispaniola from being supplied with provisions, cloathing, and other neces-66 faries of life from thence, they would not be able to carry 66 on their sugar-works in that island, and must of consequence 66 be abfolutely ruined; or perhaps, to prevent that, would furrender themselves to his majesty's forces, and put themselves under the protection of the British government." But furely. this notion is too chimerical to be entertained by any but those of heated imaginations. As I have before observ'd, if we did not fupply them, would it follow from thence that no body else would? Would the Spaniards, Dutch, Danes, and Swedes, let slip so favourable an opportunity of inriching themselves? How does Martinico support itself? Happily for the Dutch we carry on no trade there. However we will for a moment suppose (though without granting it) that unless the French were supplied with neeffaries from America they would be obliged to abandon their plantations in Hispaniola; how would this nation be benefited? Would our trade be more extensive? Would more of our ships be employed? Would the confumption of our manufactures be more confiderable? or should we, on a balance of the account of profit and loss, find that the nation gained money by this diffress of our enemies? Or would they be thereby less enabled to continue the war? Rather would not the contrary of all these happen, and this nation be deprived of those sums of money which have in a great measure supplied us with the means of paying those subscriptions which were so readily made, to enable his majesty to prosecute with vigour and effect this just and necesfary war? And I am well affured, that if our planters in the West-Indies are asked, Whether, out of 10 livres per C. for fugars, any thing can be faved (over and above what is sufficient to support and cloath the negroes of their plantations) to answer the calls of government, or any other emergencies; they will answer in the negative. And indeed, if we may judge of the benefit that would accrue to us from the absolute acquisition of the whole island, from the advantage we have received

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received by the possession of Guadaloupe, we have no reason to wish the French would surrender it, unless we are to keep it after the peace. Will not the conduct of the inhabitants of Hispaniola be the same, after the surrender of it, as that of the inhabitants of Guadaloupe hath been? Should we not then find the absolute possession of the whole island much less advantageous to us, than having the produce of it on so cheap terms as abovemention'd *? But it is combating the air to argue against facts which can scarce possibly happen. I shall therefore say no more on this subject, but leave my readers to reflect, whether there is the least ground to expect the French can be drove to such straits as to deliver so plentiful an island up to their inveterate enemies, when their friends the Spaniards are so near at hand; but shall proceed to recapitulate the many disadvantages that will be the consequence of prohibiting slags of truce

from North-America from trading with the enemy.

In the first place the nation will be deprived of the sum of 1,500,000 l. per ann. which is at least the profit upon the sugars thus purchased at Hispaniola; neither so many ships or feamen will be employed in the commerce of this nation, to the great injury of our marine---The northern colonies will not be able to support those provincial troops which they have hitherto raifed, cloathed, and paid, at an immense expence, to affift his majesty's forces against the common enemy, or to make their remittances to England; the bad consequences of which will be feverely felt by the whole nation, as (if the war continues another year) many of the principal merchants in this kingdom will be absolutely disabled (without receiving the remittances from North-America, which ought in course to come home before the latter end of this year) to answer those demands, which the emergencies of state must necessarily make upon them. From the late act of parliament made in the 30th year of his present majesty to prevent the exportation

It is notorious, that fince we have been in possession of Guar daloupe, and the inhabitants have had the advantage of an open trade with the English, that one-third part of the produce of their fugars hath been sufficient to maintain them, to which amount they take of our manufactures; the amount of the remainder must be paid for in eash, which they keep in their own hands, or remit to their friends in France: whereas, if they can in Hispaniola barter their whole produce for sufficient to support themselves and nearest their whole produce for sufficient to support themselves and nearest themselves are they can obtain, and more they do not

f 12]

of provisions to neutral ports, which still continues in force against the Americans, they are at present prohibited from vending those commodities at all: our own islands, the only places they have liberty of shipping to, having in general been so over-stocked these eighteen months past, that scarce any body has attempted to fend any provisions there, that hath not been obliged to fell them at a loss. So that the provinces of the Massachusets, New-England, New-York, both the Ferseys, Penn-Sylvania, and the upper parts of Maryland, (whose only staple commodity hath been provisions) if this trade is stopped, will be deprived of the only means left them to make their remittances to England for the goods heretofore fent out. This will be not only an immediate detriment to the merchant both here and there, but will have this further bad consequence, that the merchant here, not being either able or willing to increase his debts in a country from which he can receive no remittances, will refuse sending any more goods to America; which will put the Americans upon manufacturing their own apparel, to the irretrievable detriment of our own staple: nor will any one imagine fuch an apprehension to be ill grounded, when he is informed, that belides the making coarse cloths, both linnen and woollen (tho' but in an inconfiderable quantity at present) there are upwards of 80000 pair of stockings worth from 2s. 6d. to 5s. Herling a pair, manufactured in and within ten miles of the city of Philadelphia. Nor can any laws restrain them from continuing to increase their manufacy tures, unless at the same time they can be employed in some other business that will be equally beneficial to them, at the fame time that it may not injure, but be of advantage to the mother-country.

Such, I apprehend, is this trade with Hispaniola for sugars, and in time of peace such would be the encouraging them to plant vine-yards, hemp, flax, and other such like commo-

dities :-- but to return;

There is another reason still behind, which seems to me to resider the condemnation of slags of truce not only impolitication in the highest degree unjust; which is, that this trade has been carried on with at least the implied consent and approbation of the government. For it cannot be supposed that his majesty's governors in North America, who granted slags of truce to private merchants to carry French prisoners to Hispaniola, and bring back others in return at their own expence, were ignorant

ignerant that in so doing they had a view to their own private advantage. Nor could they be ignorant how that advantage arose; when the slags returned to the ports from whence they first proceeded, and there made regular entries, at the several custom-houses, of the respective cargoes of foreign sugars with

which they were loaded.

These circumstances prove to demonstration that the persons who have been concerned in that trade, have not thought it illegal, or any ways contrary to the interest of the government. But, on the other hand, they looked on these flags as licences to carry on such a trade with the enemy; a trade, that it is so apparently the interest of these kingdoms to encourage by all possible means. And they were confirmed in this opinion, and many people, who doubted whether it was legal, were encouraged to engage in it, from perceiving, that the many of these ships were taken by the English privateers in North-America, at the first of the war, yet by the unanimous opinion of all the judges of every court of admiralty in North-America, not one of them hath been condemned, but discharge ed without the least hesitation, upon a supposition that a traffick of fo great utility to the nation, was not the trade intended to be prohibited by his majesty's proclamation, wherein he forbids his subjects intercourse with the enemy. That such 2 supposition was a natural one, and what they were well justified in making, on a review of the conduct of the mother country, both in this and former wars, will, I believe be granted me by any impartial enquirer, who will confider, that in the reign of her late majesty queen Anne, when an act of parliament * was made to prohibit commerce with the French; it was so prejudicial to the interest of the nation, that the legislature thought proper to repeal that act, fo far as related to the importation of wines from France &; the reason given for it was, that it was prejudicial to her majesty's revenue (an incovenience furely vaftly inferior to what the nation would experience from putting a stop to this commerce ||) and in that, as well as in the subsequent wars between us and France, tobacco has always been allowed to be fent to the enemy, on account of the

It is notorious, that in the late war with Spain, a trade with the enemy in New Spain, was so far from being esteemed illicit, that admiral Vernon, when on the coast, gave the ships of his majesty's subjects all the countenance and protection he possibly could, in their prosecution of it.

[14] profit the nation received therefrom, which is faid to be not less than 250,000 l. per annum. If that is a sufficient reason for allowing us to export tobacco to the enemy, will not the reafon for fuffering the abovementioned trade be fix times as strong in proportion to the profit, which is fix times as great? That a total intercourse was not intended to be prohibited, let any one judge from the quantity of French cambricks legally imported, and for which cash, to a very large amount, is annually fent out of the kingdom; from the bills upon Paris, and other parts of France, that are publickly negociated every week apon the Royal Exchange, and from the French news-papers, which are brought over by every. Flanders mail. It must, I day, from these facts, be sufficiently clear, that his majesty's proclamation can only be intended to prohibit such a commerce with France, as is prejudicial to the interest of the nation; whether this is fuch, let the impartial détermine: nay, let our fugar-planters themselves be the judges, whether there can be a more effectual method of destroying the French in the island of Hispaniola, than thus buying their commodities at so low a price. What remonstrances should we not, have from them, on account of their calamitous fituation, if they were obliged to dell their sugars in Jamaica, &c. at 78. 6d. or 10s. per C? I will be bold to affirm, fuch a trade carried on with the French, will, in the course of a few years, more effectually ruin them, than ten such victories as that so gloriously gained last year on the plains of Minden. After what has been faid, will it not appear cruel and imjust to condemn the vessels abovementioned an have been taken carrying on fuch trade with the enemy, confidering the countenance and encouragement that have been thus given by his majesty's governors to those who have engaged in it; and who, if their vellels and cargoes now taken be conficated, will not only be ruined themselves, but will in their fall crush many of those merchants in England, who are connected with them in shipping their goods upon credit, without being the least concerned with them in the above commerce (which however there could not be any reason to think illegal) and can there be a more effectual step taken to stop the circulation of cash in this metropolis (where already the wheel moves with the utmost difficulty) than thus to dam up the most considerable source from whence our riches flow? However, if those whose province it is to judge of these matters find fuch mischievous consequences arising from this com-

merce, as may render it expedient to put a stop to it, it may be done without using any rigour by prohibiting the governors in North-America to grant flags of truce to the French islands for the future, which would effectually answer the purpose. I therefore flatter myself with hopes, that although by the Arica letter of his majesty's proclamation, these vessels, with their cargoes, may be liable to confifcation; yet that the lords of appeal will remember that good maxim of the law "funmum injura;" which, if they should be condemned, will be most fatally verified, not more to the detriment of individuals, than of the public.

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